

AMENDMENTS

Please make the following amendments:

In the Specification:

The Abstract has been amended in light of the Examiner's objection. A marked-up copy of the Abstract showing all amendments is reproduced below:

ABSTRACT

~~Disclosed is a~~ This invention relates to a mechanical apparatus for gripping and manipulating tubular members, such as drill pipe. The apparatus is essentially an automated slip puller, which generally comprises a slip base, a pulling mechanism pivotally attached to the slip base, and at least one cylinder or spring attached to the pulling mechanism. The entire apparatus is releasably connected to a rotary table located over a borehole. In a typical well drilling operation, the automated slip puller is attached to a slip assembly, which is thereafter placed around a drill pipe and positioned in the rotary table bushing. When the automated slip puller is activated, the pulling mechanism removes the slip assembly from the rotary table bushing and from around the drill pipe, thereby allowing the drill pipe to be manipulated in or out of the well bore. During operation, no portion of the automated slip puller is located outside the boundary of the rotary table.

In the Claims:

1. (Original) An automated slip puller apparatus comprising:
 - (a) a slip base located on a rotary table;
 - (b) a pulling mechanism pivotally attached to the slip base,
 - (c) slips connected to the pulling mechanism; and
 - (d) at least one cylinder connected to the pulling mechanism and operable to move the pulling mechanism between an activated and a deactivated position, wherein no portion of the pulling mechanism is outside of the boundary of the rotary table.
2. (Currently Amended) The automated slip puller apparatus of claim 1, wherein the slip base is connected to the rotary table via [[the]] kelly bushing receptacles.